



# Department of Justice

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## **ATTORNEY GENERAL ASHCROFT APPOINTS LORI SCIALABBA AS CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF IMMIGRATION APPEALS**

**WASHINGTON, DC** – Attorney General John Ashcroft announced the appointment of Lori Scialabba to be the Chairman of the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) within the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR). Ms. Scialabba has been the Acting Chairman since April 2001. She was appointed to the BIA by Attorney General Reno in March 1998, and then became Vice Chairman in June 1999.

"Lori Scialabba is a universally respected immigration lawyer and a dedicated career lawyer at the Department of Justice," said Ashcroft. "I am confident she is the right person to implement the Department's reforms at the Board of Immigration Appeals and ensure all litigants receive a prompt and fair adjudication of their immigration appeals."

The BIA has nationwide jurisdiction to hear appeals of decisions made by 220 Immigration Judges in 51 Immigration Courts and by officers of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). The BIA's decisions are binding on all Immigration Judges and the INS unless modified or overruled by the Attorney General or a federal court.

In February 2002, Attorney General Ashcroft announced significant reforms to the BIA in order to increase efficiency within the immigration court system. These reforms, which are now finalized, are aimed at eliminating the backlog of cases, preventing unwarranted delays, and improving the quality of board decision-making while ensuring due process for those in the immigration court process. Under Lori Scialabba's leadership, the Board expanded its existing streamlining initiative and otherwise dramatically increased its productivity. The pending caseload at BIA has been reduced since January 1, 2002 from 58,200 cases to 46,700 in a 7-month period. In addition, the Board has doubled its monthly rate of decisions.

The BIA is part of EOIR, a Department of Justice (DOJ) agency that is independent from the INS and is responsible for exercising the Attorney General's authority to adjudicate the cases of aliens who are charged with immigration law violations, or who seek relief from removal.

Ms. Scialabba began her career with the DOJ in October 1985 through the Attorney General's Honor Program and served as a trial attorney for the INS in Chicago, where she litigated deportation cases. From 1986 to 1989, she served as Assistant General Counsel for INS Headquarters in Washington, D.C. In 1989, she joined the Office of Immigration Litigation, Civil Division at DOJ as a trial attorney until 1991.

She held the position of Associate General Counsel at the INS from 1991 to 1994 when she was appointed Deputy General Counsel for the INS. She held that position until her appointment to the BIA.

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